

# Councils cannot shoot strays

STAR 18/6

LOCAL councils will no longer be allowed to shoot stray dogs under the Animal Welfare Bill passed by the Dewan Rakyat or they risk being fined up to RM100,000.

Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob gave his assurance that dogs would be listed as among those animals that could not be shot by local authorities as one way of controlling their population.

"If the local authorities continue to shoot dogs, they can be punished and fined up to RM100,000 under this Bill," he said in his reply to points raised during the debate on the Bill. However, he added that there would be exceptions, such as diseased dogs.

Ismail Sabri said there needed to be legal provisions to allow local councils to shoot crows and kill rats which could be vectors for diseases.

"But I agree that shooting stray dogs to control their population should not be allowed,"

he said.

Under the Bill, anyone who beats, kicks, tortures, neglects or abandons any animal can be charged for animal cruelty and face a fine of between RM20,000 and RM100,000 and a jail term of up to three years.

On claims that veterinarians were cutting off the tails and ears of dogs and other animals for cosmetic purposes, Ismail Sabri said action could be taken in such cases.

"Such surgery can be done if the animal is suffering from disease or injury," he said.

Earlier, Deputy Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr James Dawos Mamit said there were 26 cases of illegal wildlife hunting between 2011 and April this year.

"No cases of illegal hunting for tigers were brought to court," he told Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali (BN - Bagan Serai), who had asked about the extent of such activities against the animal.